



For Immediate Release:
April 29, 2016

Contact: Jean Kelly
Telephone: 225.219.3966

Governor proclaims May as Air Quality Awareness Month

BATON ROUGE – Gov. John Bel Edwards has declared May Air Quality Awareness Month in Louisiana. Even though the air quality in Louisiana is the best it has been in years, there is still much work to do. May is traditionally the start of ozone season and the proclamation encourages citizens to become familiar with the Air Quality Index, to understand what causes ozone formation and to take voluntary steps to help prevent ozone formation and improve air quality.

When conditions are right, the air pollutant ozone is formed. It is formed by a chemical reaction when the pollutants nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds, react under a bright sun. Ozone formation is most prevalent between May 1 and Sept. 30, but it can occur at other times. When everyone takes necessary steps to limit the release of ozone-causing pollutants into the atmosphere, there is a good chance that ozone formation may decrease.

Baton Rouge, Shreveport, Lake Charles, Houma/Thibodaux, New Orleans and Lafayette are participants in the Advance Program set up by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This program encourages areas which are close to violating the ozone standard to plan and institute local measures to prevent their area from becoming a nonattainment area.

Good air quality is every ones responsibility. Industry is regulated but there are steps the public can take to improve air quality. Those include: walking, biking, carpooling, using mass transit and ride sharing. Use gasoline powered engines after 6 p.m. and fuel your car when weather conditions are cooler. When running errands, plan and combine them for less driving. Don't idle your vehicle – walk into the restaurant or turn off your engine. Carpool when you can, and bring your lunch in lieu of driving. Conserve energy in your home and buy energy efficient appliances.

It is important to know about the air and DEQ offers ways for you to get more information. If you are interested in receiving air quality information automatically by email, text or on a phone app, subscribe to EnviroFlash. This system allows citizens to receive daily or on demand air quality information and ensures that the public receives Ozone Action Day alerts and other pertinent air quality information.

To subscribe for EnviroFlash go to www.deq.louisiana.gov/enviroflash. Current air quality information is available for the DEQ air monitors on the DEQ website, <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/PROGRAMS/Air.aspx>. If you would like to receive real time notification when levels of ozone, SO₂ and PM_{2.5} are elevated, you can also sign up on the web site.